DPD 1695
November 23, 1983
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Report to: Mr. Smeaton, Chairman and Members of the Planning and Development Committee

Mr. Campbell, Chairman and Members of Regional Council

Councillors:

Proposed Regional Policy Plan Amendment No. 15 Regarding the Location of Group Homes In Residential Areas

INTRODUCTION

In the last five years, the Provincial government has been actively involved in promoting the concept of "Group Homes" to provide care, treatment, supervision, and alternatives in community living for small groups of persons with physical, social or mental handicaps in a family atmosphere. Group Homes serve a broad spectrum of the population including special groups of children, disadvantaged adults, and senior citizens. The above initiative has emerged from a Governmental conviction that small community-oriented facilities provide more effective treatment settings than large institutional facilities and at lower costs.

To implement the above initiative, the Provincial government has adopted an "encouragement" policy, through which area municipalities and Regions across the Province were requested to, if necessary, amend their Official Plans and Zoning By-laws to permit group homes in residential areas. Such an amendment would permit group homes to locate in residential areas without the need for individual "spot rezonings". However, such homes would still have to satisfy the licensing and funding approval requirements of the appropriate Ministry under which the home was going to be established.

It was in response to the Provincial request to amend the Policy Plan that the Region became involved in the group homes issue. The Region's interest in social services, the provision of adequate housing to all groups in their own communities, the lack of a consistent approach to the issue across the Region, and the consensus of the Social Service community that small group home settings are more appropriate treatment environments than institutions all prompted the Region to respond to the Provincial request.

BACKGROUND

The Regional Planning and Development Committee and Regional Council have been considering the issue of the location of group homes in residential areas in Niagara for some time. In that process, the following five reports have been prepared and reviewed, with the main points from the reports being as follows:

a) DPD 1375, dated October 8, 1980, in which it was recommended that the Region amend its Policy Plan by including the following policy:

> "The Regional Municipality of Niagara supports group homes being established in any residential area in Niagara subject to the Region being satisfied that it meets the Regional distance separation formula and all Provincial licensing and funding approval requirements and appropriate Regional conditions."

It was also recommended in DPD 1375 that certain review procedures be adopted as normal procedures for considering the issuance and/or renewal of licensing or funding approval for a group home. DPD 1375 was received by Regional Council and circulated to relevant social agencies and to the area municipalities for review.

b) DPD 1381, dated October 22, 1980, provided a listing of the 51 group homes then operating throughout the Region. DPD 1381 was received and circulated to the area municipalities.

c) DPD 1544, dated April 28, 1982, in which the following Policy Plan amendment was proposed.

> "The Regional Municipality of Niagara supports the establishment of group homes in any residential area in Niagara subject to the Provincial licensing and funding review procedure having adequately considered the input of the appropriate locally-based review procedure. That procedure would normally include representation from the area municipality or municipalities, social agencies, and appropriate social or health planning bodies.
>
> For purposes of this policy a "group home" is defined as a single housekeeping unit in a residential dwelling in which three to ten residents (excluding staff or the receiving family) live as a family under responsible supervision consistent

with the requirements of its residents. The home must be licensed or approved under provincial statute and be in compliance with municipal by-laws. At the discretion of the area municipality, the maximum size could be eight residents (excluding staff or the receiving family)."

In addition, to provide area municipalities with some flexibility in implementing the proposed amendment, it was proposed that:

i) a broadly based review mechanism be established with representation from the area municipalities, social agencies, and appropriate social or health planning bodies;

ii) the area municipality determine appropriate distance separation between group homes;

iii) the area municipality be permitted to reduce the maximum number of residents, exclusive of staff or receiving family, from 10 to 8.

DPD 1544 was circulated once more to social agencies which replied to the circulation of DPD 1375, and to the area municipalities.

d) DPD 1618, dated January 26, 1983, in which it was proposed that three alternative approaches to the provision of group homes be considered at public meetings. Those approaches were:

i) To permit all nine types of group homes in all residential areas,

ii) To permit four types of group homes in all residential areas,

iii) To permit two types of group homes in all residential areas.

DPD 1618 was reviewed by Regional Council which directed that it be considered at a joint meeting of the Planning and Development and the Social Services Committees. At that meeting, held on February 18, 1983, the following resolutions were passed, and these were subsequently confirmed by Regional Council at its next meeting on March 3, 1983.

"That Report DPD 1618, January 26, 1983, respecting Group Homes In Residential Neighbourhoods, be received.

That the Region adopt a policy that the locations and types of Group Homes to be established in residential neighbourhoods be left to the discretion of the area municipalities, noting that the licensing and approval of group homes is controlled by Provincial legislation, and the established homes must be in compliance with municipal by-laws.

That the Region amend the Policy Plan to include the necessary wording encouraging the establishment of group homes in residential neighbourhoods.

That copies of this resolution be circulated to area municipalities and that the municipalities be advised that the Region would be willing, if requested, to visit the local municipalities to offer assistance and advice."

Based upon the above resolutions, DPD 1648 was prepared.

e) DPD 1648, dated May 11, 1983, in which the following proposed Policy Plan amendment was presented:

"The location and types of group homes which are permitted within a municipality shall be at the discretion of the area municipality.

The Regional Municipality of Niagara will encourage the provision of adequate and necessary group homes as a normal use in residential areas within the Region. The location of such homes will be subject to Provincial licensing and/or funding approval, both of which require compliance with municipal by-laws."

Five implementation procedures were adopted by Regional Council as a basis for Regional encouragement of the provision of adequate and necessary group homes. These procedures are:

i) A Regional review and report to this Committee and Council on the status of area municipal Official Plans and Zoning By-laws with respect to the provision of group homes in residential neighbourhoods.

ii) Based upon the above review, and where appropriate, it is proposed that the Region could request area municipalities to amend their planning documents to encourage the provision of group homes in residential neighbourhoods. The area municipalities might wish to develop alternative options in terms of providing group homes and the advantages and disadvantages of the options could be reviewed through public discussions.

iii) If proposed Official Plans and/or zoning by-laws and/or Amendments developed by an area municipality were discouraging or not encouraging the provision of group homes in residential neighbourhoods, the Region would note this in a review of the proposals, and a decision would then have to be made by this Committee and by Regional Council as to whether or not the issue was sufficiently important to warrant a Regional objection to the proposal. This does not eliminate the decision-making role of the area municipalities, it merely provides an opportunity for the Region to have its encouragement policy fully considered in the review of the issue.

iv) From time to time the Region will provide informational reports on the group homes issue. This could, for example, be a review of material which area municipalities might not be expected to be aware of, or a summary of policy changes which may have occurred. In addition the Regional Planning Department and Social Planning staff would be available to provide information and assistance on the issue to an area municipality upon request.

v) After three years after the adoption of an Amendment to the Regional Plan with respect to the provision of group homes, it is proposed that the whole issue be reviewed in terms of progress which may have been made in terms of providing group homes, changing Provincial policies or guidelines, and the municipal context.

It was further recommended that staff be authorized to hold a public meeting on the proposed amendment, this permission was granted, and the resulting public meeting was held in the Regional Council Chambers on June 28, 1983. A new Planning Act became effective on August 1, 1983 and any amendments under review as of that date came under the new regulations, one of which was a requirement that 30 days notice be given for a public meeting on a proposed Amendment. As a result, another public meeting was advertised with 30 days notice being given for the October 27, 1983 date.

The presentations made at the two public meetings and related materials are summarized below. A copy of the complete briefs and letters is enclosed as an Appendix to this report. The commitment was made at the October 27, 1983 public meeting that the complete materials would be presented to this Committee and to Regional Council.

PUBLIC INPUT TO THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Before discussing the presentations made at the two public meetings, the results of the circulation of the earlier reports might be briefly referred to. In response to the circulation, replies were received from social agencies and from most area municipalities. In summary form, the social agencies supported the approach of permitting group homes in residential areas, whereas the area municipalities generally preferred to continue the approach of proceeding through the spot rezoning process. The details of the various responses are available in the earlier reports.

PRESENTATIONS AT THE JUNE 28, 1983 PUBLIC MEETING

The main points of the various presentations are presented in summary form.

(i) The Community Mental Health Action Coaltion of Niagara (Appendix, pages 1-5) indicated that:

> "The Regional Municipality of Niagara should require all municipalities to allow the establishment of group homes in residential areas."

The brief contained reference to the need for group homes as identified by the Regional Social Services Department, the Health Needs Task Force of the Niagara District Health Council, and a variety of social service agencies throughout the Region.

The conclusion of the brief was that the "encouragement" policy would not result in a consistent approach to the provision of group homes to fill an identified and documented need. Some myths and misconceptions about the group homes issues were also discussed.

(ii) Mr. Larry Minaker, the Community Development Manager, Ontario March of Dimes presented a brief (Appendix 6-7). The major point of that brief is summarized in the following quote:

> "I urge the Region of Niagara to reconsider its proposed Policy Plan Amendment....a much stronger stand is necessary."

(iii) Alderman Roach from the City of Thorold made a verbal presentation which supported the position of the Community Mental Health Action Coalition of Niagara brief. Alderman Roach indicated that Thorold was looking to the Region for a model approach to the issue, and that the Region should take a firmer stand to provide a more even distribution of group homes across the Region.

(iv) Mr. Rapelje, Senior Citizens Department, Regional Municipality of Niagara, made a verbal presentation which raised three issues:

- Would local by-laws supersede the authority which he has to establish group homes for senior citizens under the Homes for the Aged Act?

  The answer appears to be "yes", in that group homes would have to be established in the context of the local by-law which is in effect. If the by-law did not permit the group home, a rezoning would be required.

- If each municipality is allowed to develop its own by-laws, would he have to develop a different approach for and apply individually to, each area municipality?

  The answer is that individual applications would have to be made to each area municipality. Whether or not a different approach would be required would depend on the details of the existing zoning by-laws.

- Who will ensure that a consistent standard of service is maintained between municipalities?

  At present no individual agency carries out this role. The different ministries which approve group homes review the quality of service offered in the individual establishments.

(v) Dr. Harold Latham, Niagara District Health Council member, made a verbal presentation, noting the increased acceptance of group homes by the public, and encouraging the Region to play a leadership role.

(vi) Alderman Ben Vandezande of the City of St. Catharines made a verbal statement encouraging the Region to take a leadership role on this issue, and to develop a more forthright plan to ensure that a consistent approach to the issue was adopted by area municipalities.

(vii) Ms.Anne Sachar, Planning Department, City of Niagara Falls presented a formal submission from the City of Niagara Falls (Appendix, pages 8-11). A summary of the Niagara Falls position is as follows:

> "In summary, the City of Niagara Falls can support proposed Amendment No. 15 to the Policy Plan as reported in DPD 1648 if the Region can assure the City of Niagara Falls that the proposed procedures do not imply an interference with Area Municipalities' policy decisions with respect to the acceptance or non-acceptance of Group Homes. Also, the Region's "encouragement" of Group Homes policies in Area Municipalities will be upon request, as mandated by the Region's policy of encouragement.
>
> The support of Niagara Falls for this Policy Amendment is subject, therefore, to the Region's review and revision of the proposed implementation procedures."

Since the public meeting, the Region has received correspondence from three other municipalities supporting the Niagara Falls position. These letters are from:

- The Town of Fort Erie, dated July 13, 1983 (Appendix, page 12).
- The Town of Grimsby, dated July 20, 1983 (Appendix, pages 13-15).
- The Town of Lincoln, dated August 9, 1983 (Appendix, pages 16-19).

The following table provides a summary of the positions as they emerged at the June 28, 1983 public meeting, and the subsequent letters from the three area municipalities. Clearly the earlier distinction between the positions of the social agencies and some area municipalities still applies.

The Region Should Take A Stronger Policy Stance	The Region's "Encouragement" approach should be at the request of the area municipalities
The Community Mental Health Action Coalition of Niagara	The City of Niagara Falls
Mr. Larry Minaker, Ontario March of Dimes	The Town of Fort Erie
Alderman Roach, City of Thorold	The Town of Grimsby
Dr. Latham, Niagara District Health Council Member	The Town of Lincoln
Alderman Ben Vandezande, City of St. Catharines	

Presentations at the October 27, 1983 Public Meeting

The main points of the various presentations are shown in summary form.

i) Aldermen Holland and Roach made a written presentation on behalf of the City of Thorold (Appendix, pages 20-22), the conclusion of which was that:

> "The City of Thorold would like to request the Region to review its position on group homes, as outlined in Amendment No. 15, since it may lead to a greater concentration of these facilities in certain municipalities. The City of Thorold feels some provision should be made at the Regional level for a more equitable distribution of group homes across the Region."

ii) Mr. Frank Lussing for the Niagara District Health Council (Appendix, pages 23-30) emphasized the need for a variety of housing for various client groups. The conclusion was that:

> "The objectives in the recommendations on community housing needs as identified in Niagara's Health Action Plan for the 1980's, and as restated in this position paper, represent a sincere attempt to facilitate an improvement in the community housing situation in Niagara for those with health care needs. Members of the Niagara District Health Council sincerely hope that Niagara's elected representatives will work vigorously towards the implementation of these recommendations."

iii) The Social Planning Council of St. Catharines and Thorold presented a brief (Appendix, pages 31-35) which stated:

"1. That we support the Provincial governments program of de-institutionalization;

2. That the Region should initiate leadership and should legislate that the municipalities provide group homes in their area; and,

3. That we recommend that a public awareness program be implemented for each area in which a group home facility is proposed, similar to the group homes Community Outreach program proposed by the Planning and Development Department of the City of Toronto."

More details were provided on each of the above points in the Social Planning Council's brief (Appendix, pages 31-35.)

iv) The Niagara Children's Services Committee presented a brief (Appendix, pages 36-41), the main thrust of which was that:

> "The Children's Services Committee wishes to be recorded as suggesting Planning and Development Committee and in turn the Region now take the strong, progressive leadership in the group homes issue that it contemplated in DPD 1375 - supporting the establishment of group homes in any residential area in Niagara."

v) The Community Mental Health Action Coalition of Niagara presented a brief (Appendix, pages 42-45) which concluded with the following statement:

> "The Community Mental Health Action Coalition and Management Committee for the housing program challenge the Councillors of Regional Niagara to take a progressive leadership role by REQUIRING all municipalities to allow group homes in all residential areas throughout the Region."

Again, some "Myths and Misconceptions" were reviewed.

vi) Alderman Ben Vandezande of the City of St. Catharines made a verbal presentation inviting the Region to show leadership on this issue.

vii) Mr. Sam Morreale, Program Supervisor from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, made a verbal presentation and asked that the Region reconsider its proposed approach. A more directive approach on the part of the Region would help in obtaining a consistent approach from one municipality to another.

viii) Mr. Tim Howe, from the Welland Association for the Mentally Retarded, made a verbal presentation and indicated that the Region had a responsibility to give leadership on this issue. At the moment, agencies only look to establish group homes in certain areas of the municipality in which they are permitted through the zoning by-law. Also, there were rarely any major problems after a group home was established.

ix) Mr. Chuck Hopkins, President of the West Lincoln Association for the Mentally Retarded, made a verbal statement which indicated that property values did not decline after a group home was established nearby, and that it was preferable for an agency that was considering the establishment of a group home to do so in a low-key way, and not to unduly publicize the proposed location in advance of establishing the home.

x) Ms. Winnifred Simpson, Administrator of Satellite Homes for Senior Citizens, Regional Municipality of Niagara made a verbal presentation in support of a stronger approach to the provision of group homes. In particular Ms. Simpson supported the brief presented by Niagara Children's Services Committee.

xi) The City of Niagara Falls, by letter dated October 19, 1983 (Appendix, page 46) indicated that its position, as outlined at the June 28, 1983 meeting, still applied.

In addition, the Planning and Development Department has received a letter from Ms. Susan Rochford of the Town of Fort Erie (Appendix, pages 47-48), which indicates that the proposed Amendment is not sufficiently strong in its support for the establishment of group homes as a normal use in residential neighbourhoods. In discussing the issue with Ms. Rochford, she indicated that the proposal referred to in her letter was that outlined in the March of Dimes brief (Appendix, pages 6-7.)

Again, in summary, the presentations to the October 27, 1983 public meeting indicated as follows:

<u>The Region should take a Stronger Policy Stance</u>

The City of Thorold
Niagara District Health Council
The Social Planning Council of St. Catharines and Thorold
Niagara Childrens' Services Committee
The Community Mental Health Action Coalition of Niagara
Alderman Ben Vandezande, City of St. Catharines
Mr. Sam Morreale, Program Supervisor, Ministry of Community and Social Services
Mr. Tim Howe, The Welland Association for the Mentally Retarded
Ms. Winnifred Simpson, Senior Citizens Department, Regional Municipality of Niagara.

Thus, at the October 27, 1983 meeting, the presentations were overwhelmingly in support of a stronger Regional policy stance. The exception was the City of Niagara Falls which communicated by letter that it was maintaining its earlier position. Presumably all the submissions from the first public meeting still apply. Moreover, staff did inform some inquirers that they did not need to attend the second public meeting to repeat their position from the first meeting.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE ACTION

The above, lengthy review procedures have resulted in a situation where the Regional Council is proposing an "encouragement" approach to the group homes issue. That approach, including the five implementation procedures decided earlier, is not considered adequate by those social service agencies which addressed the public meetings,but some area municipalities still object to the proposed implementation procedures. The following is a suggested outline for further consideration of an appropriate Regional approach to this issue.

In short three alternative policy approaches to providing group homes are:

i) Requiring that all nine types of group homes be permitted in all residential areas,

ii) Encouraging area municipalities to permit them, and

iii) Requiring that some types of group homes be permitted in all residential areas.

Of course, there are other variations possible on these three alternatives.

The three approaches are briefly presented for the consideration of this Committee and Regional Council.

i) The first approach was initially recommended in DPD 1375 and has been discussed at considerable length by the Planning and Development Committee. The advantages are that it would be a consistent approach from one municipality to another, and would implement the Provincial policy. Although it has already been considered and has not been adopted, it still remains an approach to the issue.

ii) The second approach is one of "encouragement" and this is the approach currently being considered. The approach allows area municipalities to decide on the location and types of group homes that would be allowed in each area. The exact wording of the proposed amendment is on page 4. Although it will, hopefully, encourage area municipalities to permit some types of group homes, the proposed amendment will not provide a consistent position from one municipality to another. The reactions to the proposed policy from both area municipalities and social agencies have already been presented in this report.

iii) A third approach, which has not been considered in any detail but which has some advantages, is that the Region require that some types of group homes be permitted in all areas, but leave the other types to be located through the rezoning procedures. This has some advantages in that it would encourage the provision of at least certain types of group homes, while it would also provide for consistency. Meanwhile, some of the more contentious types would be left to the current rezoning procedures. Such an approach would provide some of the initiatives requested by the social agencies in the public meetings, but would also avoid forcing area municipalities to accept certain types of group homes.

If this approach is favoured by Committee and Council, the wording of an appropriate amendment can be developed, so that another public meeting may be held.

In reviewing this issue with the Regional Social Services Department, the following types of homes appear to be those which are most needed and most likely to be located. These types of homes are:

- homes for the mentally retarded,
- satellite residences for Seniors,
- Children's residences,
- mental health group homes,
- halfway houses for the socially disadvantaged.

With respect to size of group homes, it is desirable that up to eight residents (excluding staff or the receiving family) be permitted. This would allow smaller homes to exist but would also permit up to eight people which appears to be a reasonable size from both treatment and economic perspectives.

Three municipalities are presently developing by-laws regarding group home locations, and the situation for these is as follows:

Grimsby - will permit in all residential areas, group homes approved under the following programs:

Accommodation Services for the Mentally Retarded (permits up to 5 residents),

Satellite Residences for Seniors, (permits up to 6 residents),

Children's Residences, (permits up to 5 residents),

Halfway Houses for the Social Disadvantaged (permits up to 5 residents).

Other types and sizes of group homes are permitted in other zones.

Pelham - will permit in all residential areas, group homes approved under the following programs:

Accommodation Services for the Mentally Retarded,

Satellite Residences for Seniors,

Children's Residences,

Approved Homes (psychiatric care).

In terms of size, between 3 and 6 residents are permitted.

Niagara Falls - will permit in all residential areas, group homes approved under the following programs:

Accommodation Services for the Mentally Retarded,

Satellite Residences for Seniors,

Approved Homes (psychiatric care),

Homes for Special Care.

It is presently intended that up to 5 residents will be permitted in each of the above types of group home.

Several of the above programs are apparently presently frozen programs under which it is highly unlikely that new group homes will be established in the near future. Also, of course, the by-laws are more restrictive in terms of size than is desired, since they limit the size of homes in residential areas to less than the eight residents which is considered reasonable.

The nine group homes programs are presented on pages 49-52 of the Appendix.

Normally, with respect to the consideration of Policy Plan amendments, planning staff recommend a preferred position for review by Committee and Council. For this issue however, as indicated in this report, earlier discussions, which have emerged from various staff proposals, have culminated in a direction to staff to prepare the "encouragement" amendment. That direction still applies, so that the purpose of this report has been to elaborate on the public input regarding the amendment, and, in view of that input, to outline the various policy alternatives. It is proposed that Committee and Council now decide on the appropriate future policy direction on this issue.

Recommendation

1. That; in view of the earlier staff reports, Committees' and Councils' direction, and public input with differing opinions; Committee and Council provide direction either to proceed with the "encouragement" policy currently under review or to prepare appropriate wording for an alternative policy.

Prepared by,

George Nicholson
Planner

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Veale
Planning Director

Corwin T. Cambray
Manager, Policy Planning

GN/jm

APPENDIX TO DPD 1695

Table of Contents

Presentations to the June 28, 1983 Public Meeting

Items		Pages
1.	Brief from The Community Mental Health Action Coalition of Niagara	1 - 5
2.	Brief from Mr. Larry Minaker, Ontario March of Dimes	6 - 7
3.	Presentation from the City of Niagara Falls	8 - 11
	Correspondence Received	
4.	Letter from the Town of Fort Erie	12
5.	Letter and report from The Town of Grimsby	13 - 15
6.	Letter and report from The Town of Lincoln	16 - 19
	Presentations to the October 27, 1983 Public Meeting	
7.	Presentation from the City of Thorold	20 - 22
8.	Brief from Mr. Frank Lussing, Niagara District Health Council	23 - 30
9.	Brief from the Social Planning Council of St. Catharines and Thorold	31 - 35
10.	Brief from the Niagara Children's Services Committee	36 - 41
11.	Brief from the Community Mental Health Action Coalition of Niagara	42 - 45
	Correspondence Received	
12.	Letter from the City of Niagara Falls	46
13.	Letter and proposal from Ms. Susan Rochford	47 - 48
	Nine Programs and Types of Group Homes and Related Information	49 - 52

RESPONSE TO PROPOSED POLICY PLAN AMENDMENT NUMBER 15 WITH RESPECT TO THE LOCATION OF GROUP HOMES IN RESIDENTIAL AREA.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Regional Council of Niagara, members of Council of Area Municipalities, and Ladies and Gentlemen.

My name is Denise Kelly. I am a resident of St. Catharines, a parent, property owner and a taxpayer. In addition, tonight I speak to you as a member of and spokesperson for the Community Mental Health Action Coalition of Niagara. The Coalition includes members of the Canadian Mental Health Association, members of the Friends of Schizophrenics, mental health professionals, families of Niagara citizens with mental health problems and other interested residents. Our goal is to improve services including housing for the psychiatrically disabled of Niagara.

Having examined the proposed policy Plan amendment and implementation procedures for the location of group homes in residential areas in the Region, the Coalition has taken the following position:

The Regional Municipality of Niagara should require all municipalities to allow the establishment of group homes in residential areas.

Why should the Region require all Municipalities to allow group homes to be located as a normal use in residential areas within their jurisdictions?

Need for group homes has been identified repeatedly. The Regional Social Services Department has identified a need for group homes throughout the Region. The proposed policy does not meet the need identified by Regional staff.

The Health Needs Task Force of the Niagara District Health Council identified housing for the psychiatrically disabled

Niagara residents as a top priority. The recommendations on housing included the following:

> "That area municipal zoning by-laws permit community housing alternatives for the psychiatrically disabled in all residential neighbourhoods in Niagara."

A variety of social service agencies throughout the region has historically and currently identified the need for group homes.

At a provincial level, the Minister of Health, Larry Grossman and the Minister of Community and Social Services recognize the need and both Ministries fund group housing programmes.

If you have any doubt of the need for group residences for individuals with special needs, follow the families of the mentally ill or the mentally retarded adult or a physically handicapped adult as they search for appropriate, safe, affordable accommodation for their family members.

Individuals with special needs are citizens and residents in all municipalities and communities. It is the responsibility of each community to care for its own citizens. Group homes meet the housing needs for a wide variety of individuals.

In DPD 1684 which outlines the proposed Policy Plan amendment and implementation procedures for the location of group homes in residential areas in the Region, the rationale for Regional involvement includes the need for consistency in terms of types of group homes which are permitted in different municipalities and the procedures which an applicant seeking to establish a group home must follow in different municipalities; and the fact that the Region and municipalities were requested by the Province to amend their planning documents and allow group homes to be located as a normal use in residential areas throughout the Region.

As well, the need has been identified by Regional Staff.

The proposed Policy Plan amendment will not result in consistency. Simply encouraging area municipalities will result in the municipalities continuing to select the types of group homes that are seen as most acceptable. The result again is the residents of Niagara with the most desperate needs will go unserved. Requiring the municipalities to allow the establishment of group homes in residential neighbourhoods will set the proper framework for orderly and fair distribution of group homes throughout the area municipalities. The Coalition supports the "distance between group home requirement." A concentration of group homes in any one area of a municipality or in any one municipality is to be avoided.

The standardization of procedures which an applicant seeking to establish a group home must follow would streamline the procedure and greatly reduce the work required to establish group homes. Most group home applications come from volunteer community groups who are striving to fill an identified and documented need.

In addition, the Province has requested the Region and area municipalities to amend their planning documents to allow group homes as a normal use in residential areas.

Do it now and take one important step toward making Niagara a model of a caring community which allows its residents with special needs to live in accommodations that are as close to normal as possible.

MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

LAND USE

Group homes and their location is not a land use issue. Group homes are residences like any other. Residents in any given group home are selected on the basis of appropriateness of the residence and its program for the individual.

COMMUNITY FEARS FOR SAFETY

There is no evidence to suggest that residents of group homes are more prone to violent behaviour than the general population. Research has shown that psychiatric patients are more often the victims of crime than the perpetrators of crime. Appropriate supervision is provided by trained staff in group residences and the staff is accountable to a management board consisting of local community citizens. This management board in turn is responsible to the community as well as its residents and its funding body. A Waterloo study showed that 50 % of people living within 500 feet of a group home did not know it existed.

PROPERTY VALUES

Property values do not go down because a group home is located in a neighbourhood. Property values are determined by other more powerful factors in the market place. Studies in Toronto as well as in American cities have shown this conclusively. Again I stress, the Coalition supports the "distance between group homes requirement." The homes should fit into the general character and appearance of the neighbourhood. Concentration of group homes in any one area is to be avoided. This problem can best be avoided by allowing group homes in all residential areas.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION

"Why can't these people live in institutions?" you ask. For many, institutionalization is not necessary or appropriate. They are best served living in small family-like groups and integrating as completely as possible into the neighbourhood and community. There is abundant evidence that individuals with a wide variety of special needs do much better in small family-like settings than in large institutions. When housing is an individual's most pressing need, hospitalization is inappropriate and too expensive.

CONCLUSION

It is simply not good enough to follow the example of other jurisdictions in the province. Niagara has an opportunity to be a leader in the development of a humane community. In conclusion, the Community Mental Health Action Coalition challenges the Councillors of Regional Niagara to take a progressive leadership role by requiring all municipalities to allow group homes in all residential areas throughout the Region.

Denise Kelly, for
Community Mental Health Action
Coalition of Niagara
685-1144

Appendix, page 6

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ABILITY FUND

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June 28, 1983.

A Brief Concerning Proposed Policy Plan Amendment No. 15 With Respect to the Location of Group Homes in Residential Areas

Submitted by: Larry Minaker
Community Development Manager
Niagara Region
Ontario March of Dimes

On behalf of the Ontario March of Dimes, I would like to commend the Region for having called a public meeting in regard to this important issue.

The need for transition housing or "group homes" to allow individuals with special needs, especially those who have a physical, social or mental handicap, to re-enter the community is absolutely necessary at this time. Social agencies, like our own, struggle to assist our clients so that they may achieve 'de-institutionalization' 'normalization' and 'independence'. Each of these goals receive wide community acceptance and while various levels of government applaud and promote these policies, they do not go far enough to ensure that these goals can be achieved. While government cannot guarantee a disabled person life without discrimination, they can take steps to afford them the opportunity to live in a normal residential neighbourhood.

The proposed policy plan amendment does not go far enough. Regional councillors must realize that what they are proposing is just one step better than doing nothing at all. The proposal will not in any way encourage the provision of adequate facilities as a normal use in residential neighbourhoods. The debate which will take place within area municipalities following the passing of this amendment will in all probability only generate fear and discrimination. Only the most socially accepted types of group homes will most likely be accepted. Once one or

Appendix, page 7

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Lieutenant Governor of Ontario
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MR. DONALD KING
PRESIDENT

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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N3Y -.

two municipalities pass plans which discourage provision of certain types of group homes, chances are no municipality will accept them. An argument which will be used is if we allow 'them' in, we'll get them all.

Other communities have gone through this same process. It is clear that even in the most publicized instances where neighbours have organized to prevent a group home from locating in their neighbourhood that within several months of the facility's opening those same neighbours who were protesting had to admit that there was little to complain about. Their fears were unfounded. They had noticed little that was out of the ordinary.

I urge the Region of Niagara to reconsider its proposed policy plan amendment. If the region is serious about the development of a policy which will permit group homes as a normal use in residential neighbourhoods throughout Niagara, then a much stronger stand is necessary. The policy which is proposed will result in certain types of group homes either not existing at all, existing in non-residential neighbourhoods or being concentrated within one municipality. I would suggest that none of these results are acceptable.

The current amendment proposal fosters a "laissez-faire" attitude and does little to communicate to the municipalities that the Region strongly supports the establishment of group homes as normal use in residential neighbourhoods. I would therefore recommend that the Region take the necessary strong action so that the provision of all types of group homes is guaranteed in residential areas throughout Niagara. It is essential that Regional Niagara recognize the necessity and valuable contribution of group homes for persons with special needs in orienting them to and maintaining these individuals in the community.

Appendix, page 8

The City of
Niagara Falls
Canada

City Hall
Niagara Falls, Ontario
L2E 6X5
(416) 356-7521

File: ST-141
Date: 1983 06 20
Report: PD/49/83

To Mayor Thomson and Members
of Niagara Falls Council.

Members:

SUBMISSION FROM NIAGARA FALLS

Re: Region's Proposed Policy Plan Amendment No. 15 with Respect to the Location of Group Homes in Residential Areas

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That this report be endorsed by Council as the City's position with respect to the Region's Proposed Policy Plan Amendment No. 15, and

That the Planning Director present this submission to the Public Meeting being held by the Region on this matter on Tuesday, June 28, 1983.

INTRODUCTION:

Recently Regional Council approved a revised proposed policy amendment with respect to Group Homes. This policy, in essence, limits the Region's role to encourage the establishment of Group Homes in local municipal residential areas. The proposed policy is the culmination of two years' work with Niagara Falls having a significant involvement in its development. Report DPD 1648 (May 11, 1983) states the two proposed policies and outlines a proposed procedure which Regional Planning staff consider necessary to implement their encouragement policy.

In summary, the City of Niagara Falls' position is in support of the proposed policy statements but have some reservations with respect to the suitability and scope of the proposed procedure whether or not the procedures form part of the Official Plan document.

BACKGROUND:

The Region's continued involvement and revised policy approach on the Group Homes issue appears to be based on concerns stated in their DPD 1648.

In summary, they appear to be concerned that some municipalities have not moved toward developing policies on Group Homes, thus there is inconsistency in the Region's 12 member municipalities whilst the Region's Social Services still see a need for easier ways of establishing Group Homes.

Consequently, the Region's Planning Department and Social Services Department have apparently seen the need to jointly develop proposed procedure to more actively encourage local municipalities to accept Group Homes as a legitimate residential use.

Local municipalities, Social Agencies and the General Public have been invited to comment on the new proposed Group Home policy and proposed procedures at the Region's Public Meeting on June 28, 1983.

CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS' POSITION

This submission defines Niagara Falls' concerns associated with the revised policy approach outlined in DPD 1648 and outlines the assurances which should be obtained from the Region in order to support the Region's revised policy.

A. Region's Proposed Policy Plan Amendment No. 15:

Proposed policy statements are as follows -

> "The location and types of group homes which are permitted within a municipality shall be at the discretion of the area municipality.
>
> The Regional Municipality of Niagara will encourage the provision of adequate and necessary group homes as a normal use in residential areas within the Region. The location of such homes will be subject to Provincial licencing and/or funding approval, both of which require compliance with Municipal by-laws".

Staff Comments:

The Region's proposed policies seem a reasonable statement of it's desire to encourage local municipalities to consider Group Home development. In light of the Province's encouragement policy, other Regions have also taken a similar "encouragement" policy approach, leaving the preparation of detailed by-law provisions to the local municipality.

Niagara Falls considers the proposed policy as reasonable insofar as it does not appear to be detrimental to the City's chosen policy direction - allowing the City to continue its stated step-by-step approach to accepting Provincially-funded group home programs.

NOTE: The City Solicitor's Department is in the final stages of preparing a by-law which will allow certain group homes in residential areas.

The City's proposed by-law can be interpreted as a policy of "encouraging" group homes in line with the Region's policy. However, the City would like assurance from the Region that the Region's policies will allow us to continue in the direction the City has already embarked upon. It is suggested that this assurance should be on the following lines:

- that the Region's part in encouraging local municipalities to accept Group Homes should be limited to offering information and technical advice as stated in the original resolution.

B. Region's Proposed Implementation Strategy:

In addition to the proposed amendment, Regional staff is requesting that Regional Council agree to a procedure whereby the Region's staff will review local Official Plans and Zoning By-laws to determine if they encourage or discourage the establishment of Group Homes in residential areas. In cases where there is no encouragement, the municipality will be requested by the Region to make amendments to its documents to reflect the Region's position of encouraging Group Homes. In this manner, the Region will ensure that an area municipality develops policies for Group Homes in residential areas.

The Region indicates that the actual details of an amendment, regarding location and type, will be left to the discretion of the municipality. However, if a local amendment (either an Official Plan or Zoning By-law amendment) has certain policies or provisions which may be interpreted by the Region as hindering (by not encouraging) the establishment of Group Homes, Regional staff will request their Council to review that amendment proposal and decide if a Regional objection is warranted. If a municipality does not concur with Regional thinking on the matter, an Ontario Municipal Board hearing could result at the instigation of the Region.

Comment:

The City of Niagara Falls is questioning the extent to which the procedures are proposed to be used in order to carry out the mandate to "encourage". After examining the Joint Resolution of the Social Services and Planning & Development Committees (ratified by Regional Council), we believe that the prime intent was to recognize that the Municipality (in line with the Province's policy) would have complete freedom with respect to the extent to which it moves in the direction of recognizing Group Homes.

This is, in our opinion, evidenced by a statement in the resolution that reads as follows -

> ".....this resolution be circulated to area municipalities and that the municipalities be advised that the Region would be willing, if requested, to visit the local municipalities to offer assistance and advise".

The City of Niagara Falls questions the staff opinion that there is a contradiction in the two resolutions. It is our understanding that it was not the joint committee's intention to create two contradictory policy statements for the Region's Planning Department to implement but rather to state exactly what the Region's role should be in the implementation of the Province's Group Home program. It is the City's opinion that

the local municipal role as stated in the 1st policy is preeminent over the Region's "encouragement" role stated in the 2nd policy.

The City's reading of the second resolution leads us to conclude that an overuse of the policy's objective of encouraging (as described in the proposed procedures) may tend to create further complications as they can be read as showing the Region's intent to unduly press local municipalities to take a specific position as indicated by the Region. The Region would, in our opinion, thereby comprise the major policy of "local discretion".

C. Region's Proposed Review of the Group Homes Issue:

If the Region's proposed Policy Plan amendment is approved, then Regional staff indicate their intention to review in 3 years' time the whole Group Home issue to determine the progress which has been made in municipalities accepting Group Homes and any changes which might have been made to Provincial policies or guidelines on Group Homes.

Comments:

The above proposed review, included in the implementation strategy, does not, in our opinion, seem necessary. The area municipalities should continue to remain responsible with regard to determining what approach for establishing Group Homes is in the best interests of their own municipality and its residents.

In any event, all municipalities have the duty to review their Official Plan policies every 5 years or so. There is, therefore, no real justification for this speci intention.

SUMMARY

In summary, the City of Niagara Falls can support proposed Amendment #15 to the Policy Plan as reported in DPD 1648 if the Region can assure the City of Niagara Falls that the proposed procedures do not imply an interference with Area Municipalities' policy decisions with respect to the acceptance or non-acceptance of Group Homes. Also, the Region's "encouragement" of Group Homes policies in Area Municipalities will be upon request, as mandated by the Region's Policy of encouragement.

The support of Niagara Falls for this Policy Amendment is subject, therefore, to the Region's review and revision of the proposed implementation procedures.

Jointly Prepared by

A. Greaves
Planning Director

A. Sachar
Planner I

Respectfully submitted,

J. L. Collinson
Chief Administrative Officer

AG/AS/BB

Appendix, page 12

LORNE F. KENDRICK, A.M.C.T.
TREASURER

VERA A. BAUER
CLERK

200 Jarvis Street, Fort Erie, Ontario L2A 2S6
Telephone (416) 871-1600

July 15/83

OFFICE OF CLERK

To: A. Veale

- [ ] COUNCIL
- [ ] FINANCE
- [ ] PLANNING
- [ ] PUBLIC WORKS
- [ ] SOCIAL SERVICES

7/15/83 [DATE] [INITIALS]

July 13th, 1983.

The Regional Municipality
of Niagara,
2201 St. David's Road,
P. O. Box 1042,
Thorold, Ontario.
L2V 4T7

Re: Group Homes

Dear Sirs:

Please be advised that the Town of Fort Erie has endorsed the position established by the City of Niagara Falls regarding group homes as contained in their Report PD-49-83 dated June 20, 1983, a copy of which is attached hereto.

We would respectfully request notification of any further proceedings in this matter.

Yours very truly,

CAROLYN J. BOOTH, A.M.C.T.(A)

CJB:bds
Encl.
c.c. - Ken Chesney, Commissioner
Building and Planning

Appendix, page 13

TOWN OF GRIMSBY

Office of
PLANNING ADMINISTRATOR

TELEPHONE: 945-9634
945-9635

P.O. BOX 159
GRIMSBY, ONTARIO
L3M 4G3

July 20, 1983

PLEASE REFER TO FILE NO.

Mr. A. Veale, Planning Director
Regional Municipality of Niagara
P.O. Box 1042
Thorold, Ontario
L2V 4T7

Dear Mr. Veale:

Please be advised that Council of The Corporation of the Town of Grimsby met on July 18, 1983 and passed the following resolution:-

> " RESOLVED, That Report P.D. 83-50 be approved and that the Regional Municipality of Niagara Planning and Development Department be advised of our concern regarding their proposed implementation procedures for group homes (Amendment No. 15)."

Yours truly,

E. Iovio
Planning Administrator
EI/vm
Encl.

TOWN OF GRIMSBY

Appendix, page 14

P.D. 83-50
5019-17

REPORT TO: Alderman N.B. Andreychuk, Chairman & Members of the Planning and Development Committee

RE: Regional Group Homes Policy Report DPD 1648

DATE: July 14, 1983

Background

On May 24, 1983, the Regional Municipality of Niagara held a public meeting to discuss a proposed Regional Group Homes Policy and Report DPD 1648.

The Region's position on the issue is generally one of encouragement and monitor. The amendment to the Regional Policy Plan states that the Region will encourage the provision of adequate and necessary group homes and that their location will be subject to Provincial licencing and/or funding approval both of which require compliance with municipal by-laws. The location and type of group homes will be left to the discretion of each municipality.

The Region is also suggesting to supplement the policies with suggested procedures to implement the proposed amendment. These implementation procedures involve:

1. A review of the Official Plan's and Zoning By-law's of the local municipalities.

2. Where a municipality is found to discourage group homes, the Region would request the municipality to consider an amendment to their policies.

3. Where a local municipality refuses to amend their policy:

   "a decision would then have to be made by this Committee and by Regional Council as to whether or not the issue was sufficiently important to warrant a regional objection to the proposal."

4. The Region will provide assistance to local municipalities on group home issues.

5. After three years time the issue will be reviewed in terms of the progress made.

..... 2

Comments

The Town of Grimsby has actively debated the group homes issue for many years and I feel that our proposed policies indicate that the municipality has addressed the issue in a responsible manner. In time all municipalities will undoubtedly realize necessity for group homes and their control and will also establish appropriate policies. When the Region advocated a compulsory policy to force municipalities to establish liberal policies, concern was expressed from all municipalities and it is encouraging to find that the Region's position has changed to one of encouragement and promotion of liberal policies.

However, the proposed implementation policies are another matter where on the one hand a stance of encouragement is promoted in the policy plan, direct intervention is proposed in practice. It would appear that if the local municipality does not encourage group homes, the Region may initiate some form of objection which may result in a compulsory amendment to the local policies. In my view, this action would be a departure from original policy of encouragement.

Recommendation

That Report P.D. 83-50 be approved and that the Regional Municipality of Niagara Planning and Development Department be advised of our concern regarding their proposed implementation procedures for group homes (amendment No. 15).

Respectfully submitted,

E. Iovio
Planning Administrator

EI/vm

Appendix, page 16

TOWN OF LINCOLN

1970

August 9th, 1983

Mr. Corwin Cambray
Manager
Policy Planning
Regional Municipality of Niagara
2201 St. David's Road
Box 1042
Thorold, Ontario
L2V 4T7

Dear Sir:

Re: Regional Report DPD 1648, (Group Homes)

Please be advised that the Town of Lincoln Planning Committee considered the above report at its meeting on July 20th, 1983. The Committee adopted the following recommendation which was approved by Town Council on August 2nd, 1983, without change.

Moved by Ald.D.Campbell, Seconded by Ald.L.Martin
THAT this Committee recommend to Council that the Regional Municipality of Niagara be advised that the Town of Lincoln fully supports the position of Niagara Falls as expressed in the City's report PD/49/83, regarding the proposed Policy Plan Amendment No. 15 and suggested procedures.

A copy of the Town of Lincoln's staff report considered by the Planning Committee and Council is enclosed for your information.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me.

Yours very truly,

TOWN OF LINCOLN

Dennis Landry

Dennis Landry
Town Planner

DL/cr
Encls.

Municipal offices
206 King Street West
P.O Box 1030
Beamsville Ontario
563-8205 LOR 1BO

Town of LINCOLN

1970

Appendix, page 17

July 20th, 1983

REPORT TO: The Chairman and Members of the Planning Committee

RE: Proposed Amendment No. 15 to the Niagara Regional Policy Plan Pertaining to the Location of Group Homes in Residential Areas

Introduction

In the past, the Province and the Region have attempted to encourage Municipalities to relax their land use regulations which would allow Group Homes to establish themselves in existing residential neighbourhoods. Regional staff have favoured a uniform approach throughout the Region. Briefly, Group Homes provide treatment, supervision and care for community living in a family atmosphere for small groups of persons with physical, social or mental handicaps. This initiative has emerged from a belief that small community oriented homes provide a more effective treatment environment at lower costs than large institutional settings.

The Regional Municipality of Niagara has circulated Regional Planning Report DPD 1648 to area Municipalities for comment. Report DPD 1648 outlines the proposed policy plan amendment and implementation procedures for the location of Group Homes in residential areas in the Region. In addition to seeking comments from the area Municipalities, the Region has held a public meeting on June 29th, 1983, to obtain public input regarding the proposed amendment and implementation procedures.

A copy of Regional Report DPD 1648 is attached as Appendix I.

A number of Regional Reports and meetings regarding the issue of permitting group homes as a normal use in residential neighbourhoods has led to the proposed Policy Plan Amendment No. 15. On March 3rd, 1983, Regional Council approved the following recommendation of the Regional Planning and Development Committee:

"That the Region adopt a policy that the location and types of group homes to be established in residential neighbourhoods, be left to the discretion of the area Municipalities, noting that the licensing and approval of Group Homes is controlled by Provincial legislation, and the established homes must be in compliance with Municipal by-laws."

"That the Region amend the policy plan to include the necessary wording encouraging the establishment of Group Homes in residential neighbourhoods."

"That copies of this resolution be circulated to area Municipalities and that the Municipalities be advised that the Region would be willing, if requested, to visit the local Municipalities to offer assistance and advice."

cipal offices
ing Street West
ox 1030
sville Ontario
5 LOR 1B0

.....2

This resolution was previously supported in principle by the Town. To implement the position of Regional Council regarding this issue, Regional Report DPD 1648 proposes the following wording for Amendment No. 15:

"The location and types of Group Homes which are permitted within a Municipality shall be at the discretion of the area Municipalities."

The Regional Municipality of Niagara will encourage the provision of adequate and necessary Group Homes as a normal use in residential areas within the Region. The location of such homes will be subject to Provincial licensing and/or funding approval, both of which require compliance with Municipal by-laws."

The second part of the report proposes suggested procedures to implement the proposed amendment. The proposed procedures are listed on pages 5 and 6 of the Regional Report.

Town of Lincoln's Position

In the past and at the present, the Town has expressed the position that it wishes to deal with the issue of Group Homes on an individual basis subject to amendment to the Town's Zoning By-law. This would provide the Town with more control over the establishment of a Group Home in the Municipality. The Town's present Zoning By-law No. 78-85, as amended, presently permits not more than 4 children or not more than 2 adults with mental or physical infirmity to live as part of a family within the context of the Town's Zoning By-law.

Staff Report Regarding Proposed Policy Plan Amendment No. 15 and Regional Report DPD 1648

The City of Niagara Falls has adopted the recommendations of its staff regarding the Region's proposed Policy Plan Amendment No. 15. A copy of the staff report and the City's position as noted in the recommendations is attached as Appendix 2.

Briefly, the City of Niagara Falls raises some concern with regard to the Policy statements and the proposed procedures. The City recommends that the Region's part in encouraging local Municipalities to accept Group Homes in accordance with the proposed policy statements should be limited to offering information and technical advice as stated in the original resolution of Regional Council. The City feels that the detailed by-law provisions addressing the issue of Group Homes should be left to the local Municipality and the Region's involvement should only be involved in encouraging Group Homes as a normal use in residential areas as intended by Regional Council's resolution and the proposed wording for Policy Plan Amendment No. 15.

With regard to the suggested procedures to implement the proposed amendment, the City has more serious concerns since the procedures imply a more forceful role by the Region which is inconsistent with the "encouragement" role of the proposed wording for the amendment. According to the proposed procedures, "If proposed Official Plans and/or Zoning By-laws and/or amendments develop by an area Municipality were discouraging or not encouraging the provision of Group Homes in residential neighbourhoods, the Region would note this in a review of the proposals, and a decision would then have to be made by this Committee and by Regional Council as to whether or not the issue was sufficiently important to warrant a Regional objection to the proposal. This does not eliminate the decision making role of the area Municipalities, it merely provides an opportunity for the Region to have its encouragement policy fully considered in the review of the issue."

.....3

According to the City of Niagara Falls, it is their opinion that an overuse of the policies objective of encouraging (as described in the proposed procedures) may tend to create further complications as they can be read as showing the Region's intent to unduly press local Municipalities to take a specific position as indicated by the Region. The Region would, in their opinion, thereby compromise the major policy of "local discretion".

In summary, the City of Niagara Falls states that it "... can support proposed Amendment No. 15 to the Policy Plan as reported in DPD 1648 if the Region can assure the City of Niagara Falls that the proposed procedures do not imply an interference with area Municipalities policy decisions with respect to the acceptance or non-acceptance of Group Homes. Also the Region's encouragement of Group Homes policies in area Municipalities will be upon request as mandated by the Region's policy of encouragement. The support of Niagara Falls for this policy amendment is subject therefore to the Region's review and revision of the proposed implementation procedure."

Conclusions

Town staff support the position of the City of Niagara Falls as expressed in the City's report PD/49/83 and recommend that the Regional Municipality of Niagara be advised that the Town of Lincoln fully supports the City's position regarding the proposed Policy Plan Amendment and suggested procedures.

Town staff intend to investigate and provide recommendations regarding the issue of group homes when the Town's Official Plan and Zoning By-law are updated to conform with the Region's Policy Plan.

Recommendations

1. That the Regional Municipality of Niagara be advised that the Town of Lincoln fully supports the position of the City of Niagara Falls as expressed in the City of Niagara Falls report PD/49/83 regarding the proposed Policy Plan Amendment No. 15 and suggested procedures.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Landry
Town Planner

DL/cr

CITY OF THOROLD

CHARLES H. ORT, A.M.C.T.
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
AND TREASURER

(MRS.) DOREEN TAYLOR, A.M.C.T.
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ROBERT M. CORBETT, A.M.C.T.
CLERK-COLLECTOR

JAMES CRUICKSHANK, P.ENG.
ENGINEER

ADDRESS CORRESPONDENCE TO:

R. K. Holland
Aldicon Road.

October 26, 1983

The Regional Municipality of Niagara,
P.O. Box 1042,
2201 St. Davids Road,
Thorold, Ontario,
L2V 4T7.

Attention: Mr. Alan Veale
Planning Director

Dear Sir: Re: Amendment No. 15 to the Regional Policy Plan - Group Homes

When Amendment No. 15 to the Regional Policy Plan was first introduced by Regional Planning, it was the City of Thorold's opinion that many of the details relating to Group Homes should be left to the discretion of the local municipalities. This included such things as distance separation, size, and location. It was not the feeling of Council at that time to restrict or be selective in the types of homes that could locate in the City, but, rather provide provisions in the zoning by-law to deal with the types of group homes that would be permitted in each zone in the City.

The City of Thorold's Official Plan reflects this feeling and states that Group Homes will be permitted subject to the following provisions:

(a) Any group home shall be subject to the provisions of the Zoning By-law for adequate separation between group homes and other uses and may include provisions for the number and type of homes in various zones, occupancy standards and site development standards.

..... 2

(b) The size and character of any group home shall be similar to and compatible with adjacent uses.

(c) Group home locations shall be accessible to medical and educational facilities as required, cultural and recreational facilities and public transit.

(d) Group homes shall be licensed by the Provincial Ministry having authority to do so.

(e) Existing group homes shall be regarded as legal non-conforming uses in the Zoning By-law provided they are licensed by the appropriate Provincial Ministry. The expansion of an existing group home requires the approval of Council and depending on the extent and nature of the proposed expansion may require an amendment to the Zoning By-law.

(f) Council may, at its discretion, determine that other matters are required in the evaluation of an application for a group home.

Recently, several of the local municipalities in the Region have been very selective in the number and type of Group Homes that are being allowed to locate in their municipality. This has been done through two different methods.

One approach is to pass a by-law outlining the detailed requirements group homes must meet. One such example is the Town of Pelham By-law 866 (83) which restricts the types of group homes permitted to four (4) of the nine (9) types of group homes identified by the provincial government.

The second approach is through Official Plan Policies. Some municipalities in the Region have recognized all nine (9) types of group homes in their Official Plan, however, they have failed to amend their by-laws to permit all nine (9) types of group homes. An Official Plan policy recognizing all types of group homes does not ensure that all types of group homes will be permitted. The details, as in the Pelham case, are handled through provisions in the zoning by-law.

If several municipalites in the Region keep limiting the number and type of group homes, the remaining municipalities may become "dumping grounds" for the less desirable types of homes. The City of Thorold feels that all municipalities should

.....3

accept their fair share of the group home in the Region.

In light of the recent move by various municipalities to limit the type of group homes permitted in their municipality, the City of Thorold would like to request the Region review its position on group homes, as outlined in Amendment No. 15, since it may lead to a greater concentration of these facilities in certain municipalities. The City of Thorold feels some provision should be made at the Regional level for a more equitable distribution of group homes across the Region.

Yours very truly,

R.K. Holland
Chairman, Planning and
Development Committee

Appendix page 23

Niagara District Health Council

1440 Pelham Street, P.O. Box 1059
Fonthill, Ontario L0S 1E0
(416) 892-5771

position on group homes

a brief submitted to
the Regional Municipality of Niagara
October 27, 1983

Appendix, page 24

Table of Contents

Chapter	Page No.
Preface	1
Position	2
Rationale	4

Appendix, page 25

Preface

The Niagara District Health Council was established by an Order-in-Council approved by the Lieutenant Governor for the Province of Ontario on May 7, 1975. Its mandate, as reflected in the Order-in-Council, is to "...advise the Minister of Health on the planning and co-ordination of health services in the Regional Municipality of Niagara". It is currently one of twenty-five such Councils in the Province of Ontario.

In its advisory capacity, the Niagara District Health Council began an in-depth study of the Niagara region's health care needs in early 1981. The study was completed on June 15, 1983 with the publication of Niagara's Health Action Plan for the 1980's. This health services strategy document details more than 200 recommendations in the areas of Health Promotion/Disease Prevention, Institutional bed needs, Acute Care services including Cardiac Care, Perinatal Care, Long Term Care and Mental Health Care services for Niagara.

The study involved over 85 of Niagara's health care professionals directly, through their participation in seven different working groups. In addition, the entire Niagara community contributed to a discussion paper outlining many draft recommendations. Nearly 300 pages of feedback were collected and considered by the working groups as they finalized the recommendations contained in Niagara's Health Action Plan for the 1980's.

It is the group home-related recommendations contained in the Action Plan which form the basis of this position paper.

Appendix, Page 26

Position

Through this position paper, the Niagara District Health Council restates the recommendations relating directly to group homes and contained in Niagara's Health Action Plan for the 1980's. The Action Plan was unanimously endorsed by it on June 15, 1983. In effect, the Niagara District Health Council presents herewith the position of the Niagara Community's health care providers and consumers, more specifically those providers and consumers who were directly and indirectly involved in the Council's Health Needs Study and its outcome. While these group home-related recommendations are specific to the needs of the psychiatrically disabled, the Niagara District Health Council wishes to emphasize that community housing needs are as acute for the handicapped and the elderly. Readers of this position paper are, therefore, urged to keep this in mind as the recommendations noted below and on the following page are reviewed and considered.

RECOMMENDATION	REFERENCE*
THAT, community housing be recognized, accepted and supported as an integral part of the mental health system.	MH 4.01 page 56
THAT, a range of supervised housing alternatives be available in the community. This range of housing should include: - *emergency/crisis housing;* - *hostels;*	MH 4.02 page 56

* Refers to recommendation reference number and page number in Niagara's Health Action Plan for the 1980's.

- self-help group homes/supervised group homes;

- homes providing special programs to facilitate the development of living skills;

- co-operative housing having an emphasis on accountability and providing opportunities for involvement so that residents can achieve their maximum potential;

- Homes for Special Care in general and specifically for psychogeriatric residents;

- approved homes; and,

- foster homes.

THAT, area municipal zoning by-laws permit community housing alternatives for the psychiatrically disabled, in all residential neighbourhoods in Niagara. MH 4.07 page 57

THAT, local area municipalities in Niagara be encouraged to adopt a rigorous licensing by-law for boarding/lodging houses which enforce both physical standards and quality of life standards for persons with special needs and requiring assistance with activities of daily living. MH 4.08 page 58

appendix, page 28

Rationale

In its report, "Agenda for Action", the Ontario Council of Health clearly reflects the Niagara District Health Council's concern for community housing for the psychiatrically disabled. It indicated that some of these people "...are discharged to the care of the family or previous living arrangement and their placement presents no special problem. For many, however, such support is not available. They are the long term patients who have lost contact with the community, single persons with no close family ties, or persons for whom living 'independently' of their family is desirable".

"The Committee believes that many mentally impaired adults, depending upon their functional capabilities, could develop independent community living skills if a spectrum of housing alternatives was available to them....most Ontario communities only have commercial rooming house or boarding house accommodation at present. These are domiciliary in nature, and are not equipped nor intended to fulfill a therapeutic intent. As a result, large numbers of discharged patients who continue to require a therapeutic environment, are relegated to rooming house or room and board facilities - often the least desirable setting in a majority of cases."

"A continuum of housing resources would service complementing functions to psychiatric services. They would be alternatives to hospitalization for individuals deteriorating emotionally, but not requiring hospital treatment. For many patients the length of hospitalization would be reduced. Supportive housing provides the person with a transitional living opportunity which would assist in community re-integration. Permanent placement could be provided for chronically disabled individuals requiring supervision but no hospitalization." (1979, pp. 51-52)

In its policy paper, "Community Mental Health Alternatives", the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Division also suggested that a range of community housing programs be

Appendix, page 29

available, providing a range of support and varying lengths of stay (1981, pp. 27-35). Support is to include personal/emotional support, training and other organized instruction in self-care skills, and physical support, such as nursing care, and aid with basic living skills. Proposed programs included:

- co-operative residences
- structured group homes
- long term nursing care homes
- alternatives to the acute ward
- crisis/emergency housing
- housing in small centres and rural areas
- individual home support services

Both "Agenda for Action" and "Community Mental Health Alternatives" emphasize that housing is an integral part of the community support system.

In Niagara, the concern for housing for the psychiatrically disabled focuses upon four factors: types of housing, supply, quality, and affordability.

There are three types of housing available in addition to family care: Homes for Special Care, Lodging Homes, and commercial rooming/boarding homes. The Homes for Special Care provide room and board, and 24-hour supervision. Only those referred from Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital are eligible. They are licensed by the Ministry of Health and operators receive a per diem rate. The Lodging Homes provide room and board, 24-hour supervision, and follow-up care through the local general hospital. They are unlicensed, but there is a 3-way contractual agreement between the home operator, the Regional Social Services Department and the hospital. Operators receive a per diem rate. Commercial boarding homes are unlicensed, vary in price, and offer room and board.

Before determining the adequacy of the housing supply, the number of psychiatrically disabled requiring housing must be discussed. It is not known how many psychiatrically disabled live in Niagara. The only statistics available are from the hospitals which record the people who are hospitalized each year because of mental health problems. During the 1979/80 hospital fiscal year, there were 2,351 discharges from in-patient psychiatric services whose place of residence was Niagara. It is difficult to interpret this number of discharges. First, 2,351 represents cases not people - one person can be represented by more than one discharge. Second, the number of discharges does not include the psychiatrically disabled who continued to live in the community often with aid from private psychiatrists, general practitioners, and hospital out-patient services.

Appendix, page 30

The Ottawa-Carleton District Health Council has estimated a 50% annual readmission rate to in-patient psychiatric care (In A.L. Parker and L. Rosborough, "A Matter of Urgency: The Psychiatrically Disabled in the Ottawa-Carleton Community", Ottawa: Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa-Carleton Branch, 1982, p. 26). When this is applied to Niagara discharges, it is found that about 1,176 people were discharged in 1979/80.

Furthermore, the Clarke Institute estimated that 23% of those discharged needed housing assistance ("A Matter of Urgency", p. 31). In Niagara, this accounts for 270 psychiatrically disabled who required housing aid when discharged in 1979/80. Given these broad estimates, it will be evident that the current quantity of supervised housing is undoubtedly inadequate.

There are 157 psychiatrically disabled in Homes for Special Care, 81 receiving residential care and 76 extended care. There are 6 persons in Lodging Homes, all in Welland. It is not known how many psychiatrically disabled are living in commercial rooming homes, but given the small number of Homes for Special Care and Lodging Home facilities, it is large.

The psychiatrically disabled require a home-like environment which provides encouragement and support in the development and maintenance of the skills needed to carry out the activities of daily living, as well as counselling and other rehabilitation services. Homes for Special Care provide only supervision of a custodial nature. The Lodging Home Program is closer to providing the rehabilitative care needed. Rooming houses offer only room and board and are often of questionable quality. In its report on unlicensed adult residential facilities, the Regional Social Services Department identified potential problems associated with some of these homes, including unsanitary conditions, overcrowding, inadequate supervision and health care, inadequate control and monitoring of medication, physical neglect, and financial exploitation.

Since most psychiatrically disabled must find housing in the private housing market, they are often forced to pay rents they cannot afford due to inadequate incomes.

The objectives in the recommendations on community housing needs as identified in Niagara's Health Action Plan for the 1980's, and as restated in this position paper, represent a sincere attempt to facilitate an improvement in the community housing situation in Niagara for those with health care needs. Members of the Niagara District Health Council sincerely hope that Niagara's elected representatives will work vigorously towards the implementation of these recommendations.

Appendix, page 31

Social Planning Council of St. Catharines and Thorold.

Victoria School,
Room 7,
173 Niagara Street,
St. Catharines, Ontario.
L2R 4M1.

682-2297

GROUP HOMES BRIEF

TO : Regional Counicl, Municipality of Niagara

RE : Public Meeting on the Proposed New Group Homes Policy of the Regional Municipality of Niagara

DATE : October 27, 1983

PREPARED BY : Milica O. Kovacevich
PRESENTED BY: Executive Director

PROLOGUE

Councillor Smeaton, Councillor Dickson, Mr. Cambray, Mr. Nicholson and, Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Milica Kovacevich, Executive Director of the Social Planning Council of St. Catharines and Thorold, and I am here this evening representing the Social Planning Council to present our position on group homes.

INTRODUCTION

At its meeting of September 28, 1983 the Social Planning Council of St. Catharines and Thorold re-affirmed its policy:

1. THAT WE SUPPORT THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT"S PROGRAMME OF DE-INSTITUTIONALIZATION;
2. THAT THE REGION SHOULD INITIATE LEADERSHIP AND SHOULD LEGISLATE THAT THE MUNICIPALITIES PROVIDE GROUP HOMES IN THEIR AREA AND;

3. THAT WE RECOMMEND THAT A PUBLIC AWARENESS PROGRAMME BE IMPLEMENTED FOR EACH AREA IN WHICH A GROUP HOME FACILITY IS PROPOSED, SIMILAR TO THE GROUP HOMES COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMME PROPOSED BY THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY OF TORONTO.

At this time I will address each of these recommendations.

1. DE-INSTITUTIONALISATION

Dr. Hesletine, Mental Health Policy and Planning, Ministry of Health, in his discussion document Blueprint for Change: The Next Ten Years, recommends a continuation of the shift of emphasis away from the large provincial psychiatric hospital to a balanced mental health delivery system. However, the greatest hurdle is co-ordinating existing help programs and agencies to deal with people returning from institutions. And the key to community support is a place for people to live which provides for transition from institutional care to independent living. This is held true for those with psychological problems as well as for those with physical disabilities, drug and alcohol related problems, the mentally retarded, ex-offenders, children and seniors.

To quote from Novia Carter, community activist and university professor, who best states this in her book, Making Man's Environment, Housing.

"Shelter is one of the first, most basic human needs. In its simplest form, it is a structure or composition capable of providing protection from rain, wind, sun and elements. But to individuals and families, home has a social meaning which goes far beyond the idea of minimal shelter. It involves the set of activities, satisfactions, rights, obligations and expectations about a particular dwelling and those

who occupy it. The quality of the dwelling can enhance or diminish the health and personal development of its members.

The idea of home also implies location in a broader spatial setting - the neighbourhood, or the immediate surrounding residential environment. It is here that one sees the vitality of people interacting with others in the neighbourhood context, sometimes with a strong sense of community that has many benefits for the residents.

The individual dwelling and the neighbourhood are inseparable, and yet they have been separated conceptually in the past. This separation has contributed to some startling deficiencies in housing policy and programming, such as, for example, the creation of public housing in areas that are remote from recreational facilities. Peoples' needs are interrelated, and recognizing this is a first step toward meeting them in a human satisfying way."

If deinstitutionalization is going to succeed, which it must, we, the community must be willing to provide for a caring community. One way is through allowing the establishment of group homes.

2. REGIONS RESPONSIBILITY

In the past three years the Regional Municipality of Niagara has presented three Group Homes Policy Plans:

1. October, 1980 Report DPD 1375
2. April, 1982 Report DPD 1544
3. May, 1983 Report DPD 1648

In each of reports the authors described in detail all concerns i.e.

funding, licencing-in detail and presented and well documented the group home situation.

However, the key distinction of these papers has been in the dilution of the Regions responsibility to the community.

In DPD 1375:

The Region supported group homes being established in any residential area in Niagara subject to the Region being satisfied that it meets the Regional distance separation formula and all Provincial licensing and funding approval requirements and appropriate regional conditions.

Then in DPD 1544:

It added to the above recommendation that "The home must be licenced or approved under Provincial statute and be in compliance with municipal by-laws. At the discretion of the area municipality, the maximum size could be eight residents.

And then in DPD 1618:

Which is the policy plan that we have before us this evening, be amended to include the necessary wording encouraging the establishment of group homes in residential neighbourhoods.

The purpose of regional government was, in essence, to provide co-ordination and co-operation between municipalities and that the Regional Municipality would initiate this process.

This Policy Plan on Group Homes that we have before us, clearly shows that the Region is not fulfilling its role in initiation leadership to its area municipalities in facilitating co-operation and co-ordination between municipalities that enhances the well-being of all the citizens of Niagara

Region.

As stated in the introduction, the S.P.C. feels that the Region should initiate leadership and should legislate that the municipalities provide group homes in their area.

3. PUBLIC AWARENESS PROGRAMME

As we are aware, there are many myths concerning the establishment of group homes. In fact, most people are frightened of the words "group homes" more so than that of the actual facility.

Of the group homes that we have in the Region most have opened largely without incident or neighbourhood disruption.

As stated early, the planning and development department of the City of Toronto had proposed to their Council in February of 1983 a Group Homes Community Outreach Programme. A copy of this proposal is available at the S.P.C. Office.

In essence, it attempts to do as we propose this region to do--educate the community.

As a social planning council we at this time would like to extend our invitation to work with the Region in exploring this recommendation further.

SUMMARY

On behalf of the Social Planning Council, I would like to thank you for listening to this presentation this evening.

We trust that the recommendations that we have presented this evening to Council will be reviewed and we welcome any service that we can be to our Community.

Thank you.

Appendix, Page 36

October 27/83

TO: Mr. W. Smeaton, Chairman, Planning & Development Committee and Members, Planning & Development Committee and Regional Council of Niagara

FROM: Niagara Children's Services Committee

RE: Proposed Policy Plan Amendment Related to Provision of Group Homes (DPD 1648)

Mr. Chairman, members of Planning and Development Committee and of Regional Council and ladies and gentlemen:

My name is Maurice Glaude and I appear before you this evening as a member of the Niagara Children's Services Committee to present the response of that Committee to the proposed policy plan amendment regarding group homes.

As members of Council and many others present will be aware, the Children's Services Committee has been established in an advisory role to Regional Council on issues relating to the planning and co-ordination of services in Niagara for children with special needs. Among others, that population of children encompasses victims of neglect and abuse; children in difficulty with the law; children with mental health problems; mentally retarded children and children with various physical handicaps. The membership of the Children's Services Committee incorporates professional representation from these areas of service, representation from Regional Council and consumer representatives - family of the children being served. We believe that balance in representation affords the Committee some fairness of perspective.

Since early 1981, the Committee has followed the efforts of Planning Committee and Council at devising a Regional policy on Group Homes. From that time the Committee has been on record as supporting

the policy direction proposed in DPD 1375, in October of 1980, that:

> "The Regional Municipality of Niagara supports group homes being established in any residential area in Niagara subject to the Region being satisfied that it meets the Regional distance separation formula and all Provincial licencing and funding approval requirements and appropriate Regional conditions"
>
> and
>
> "That the Region expects area municipalities, if necessary, to amend their Official Plans and Zoning by-laws to conform with the Regional Policy Plan (and will include the Provincial group homes perspective in its review and comments on any proposed changes to Official Plans and/or Zoning by-laws")

While Planning Committee has laboured through several successive reports in follow-up to DPD 1375, the Children's Services Committee has maintained its support of that initial policy approach. Re-statement of the Committee's position this evening follows from alarm at how far Regional thinking seems to have regressed, from the positive leadership of three years ago to the Proposed Amendment presently before Committee.

I should clarify that we are referring to group homes as residential units generally defined as the Region has expressed it:

> " a single housekeeping unit in a residential dwelling in which three to ten residents (excluding staff or the receiving family) live as a family under responsible supervision consistent with the requirements of its residents.....licensed or approved under Provincial statute and in compliance with Municipal by-laws".

On that shared understanding of what constitutes a group home, and in respectful recognition of the sincerity of deliberations by the Region on this important issue, the Committee takes the position that

the currently proposed Policy Plan Amendment will fail to address the needs of Niagara's children whose needs and handicaps are so extensive as to require residential care and treatment. In 1980 Planning Committee had before it a policy approach that would have addressed local needs. A policy of "encouragement" will not.

It is my intention to present particular problems that the Children's Services Committee believes would be the inevitable legacy of the Proposed Amendment, should Region proceed to its passage. As a starting point, however, I want to note with irony that the Proposed Amendment will even fail to satisfy the "main justifications for Regional involvement" in the group home issue currently cited in DPD 1648:

(i) Present lack of consistency in types of group homes permitted in different municipalities and lack of consistency in procedures which an applicant must follow in different municipalities to establish a group home;

(ii) A need for group homes throughout the Region identified by the Regional Social Services Department, and

(iii) The request of the Province for the Region and area municipalities to amend their planning documents to allow group homes to be located as a normal use in residential areas.

Without belabouring the point, I'm sure the responses of local municipalities over the past year or so to attempts that have been made to establish group homes provide concrete illustration that a Regional policy of "encouragement" will not give us consistency across the Region, will not ensure that need for group homes can be met and will not be in keeping with the Province's request.

The problems presently facing the Niagara community on group homes will not be remedied by an "encouragement" approach.

I - As other groups have noted, lack of consistent policy among local municipalities will mean undue concentration of homes in municipalities with less restrictive policies.

Moreover, volunteer energies will be wasted. Surely we all regard volunteer effort as critical if we are to avoid government doing everything. We face a situation in which those important volunteer energies will be squandered in "shopping" for a permissive municipality and struggling with red tape.

We know from past experience that agencies anticipating zoning roadblocks will continue to retreat from the kind of confrontation and public outcry that they fear will harm their clients. Those agencies will continue, instead, to locate their residential programs in second and third best locations - on the periphery of our communities, often on busy highways and removed from the public transportation their clients require.

Niagara already has too many homes established under such conditions:

- the cost in public monies spent to meet transportation needs in such settings is too high;
- the cost is also too high in terms of diminished impact of the therapeutic program (for after all group homes are meant to be therapeutic and to assist clients in living as normal a life as possible)

II This raises another concern - the overcoming of the attitudes of the general public to the handicapped among us. Analysis of the history of placement in large and remote institutions of persons with handicaps teaches us that such facilities were established out of public fear and ignorance - an inability to cope with difference. Since we all learn best from direct

experience, self-fulfilling prophecy ~~ensured~~ ENSURED - the isolation of persons with difference guaranteed that public misconceptions wouldn't be alleviated.

The movement to group homes represents a reversal of the historical trend. We hear that where group homes (as defined earlier) become established, public fear is overcome and the neighbouring community, to the extent that it takes awareness of the group home at all, embraces its handicapped citizens. And children grow up with an understanding appreciation of their handicapped peers.

III Need for Group Homes. The Social Services Department has informed Planning Committee of the need for group homes throughout the Region. Undoubtedly, the Department has informed Committee that de-institutionalization is the Province's direction in several areas of service. The philosophy of as little intervention in a client's life as is required has come to determine the direction of services for virtually all populations. In the area of services to children:

- the institutions for the mentally retarded are being reduced in size (and some closed under the Province's Five Year Plan). Need for community group home beds is increasing Province-wide:

- the number of training school beds for children who've run afoul of the law has been drastically reduced to ensure that only those children who are chronic offenders and a public threat are actually incarcerated. Under the Young Offenders Act, to be proclaimed effective April 1, 1984, recognition of the legal rights of young offenders will necessitate more group home - or open custody - settings than we have to-day;
- the child welfare services of Children's Aid Societies and the children's mental services of licensed mental health centres are similarily dependent on group homes.

Need for group homes remains unmet - and is increasing.

CONCLUSION

At June's public meeting, tonight and in all likelihood from Regional staff throughout the past three years of deliberation, Planning Committee has heard dispelled many of the negative myths surrounding group homes.

Among responses received, the advocacy of local service groups has been articulate and, we would argue, must be recognized. Any tendency to view such groups as self-interested or "just another voice" must be resisted. The voice raised by local service groups is also the voice of those citizens of Niagara we are all liable to overlook because of their situations. Many of the types of needs met by group homes can arise in any family but when need to get the required services arises, the tendency is for the individual or family to struggle privately .

Only occasionally does the general public get a sense of the extent and nature of that private need. Mr. Chairman, I hope Committee will bear in mind that the need for service in a group home is a need that may potentially arise in any family in the Region. When that need arises it shouldn't require the relinquishing of basic rights to family-like surroundings in one's own municipality.

The Children's Services Committee wishes to be recorded as suggesting Planning & Development Committee and in turn the Region now take the strong, progressive leadership on the group homes issue that it contemplated in DPD 1375 - supporting the establishment of group homes in any residential area in Niagara.

Thank you for hearing this position. I would be glad to respond to any questions you might have or points you wish to discuss further.

Appendix, page 42

RESPONSE TO PROPOSED POLICY PLAN AMENDMENT NUMBER 15
WITH RESPECT TO THE LOCATION OF GROUP HOMES IN
RESIDENTIAL AREA

Members of Regional Council of Niagara, members of Council of Area Municipalities and Ladies and Gentlemen.

This statement is being submitted by the Community Mental Health Action Coalition of Niagara and the Management Committee of the newly funded housing program. The Coalition membership includes members from Canadian Mental Health Association, members of the Friends of Schizophrenics, Mental Health professionals, families of Niagara citizens with mental health problems and interested residents. The Management Committee membership was developed from members of the regional branches of Canadian Mental Health Association, Niagara Falls, Welland and St. Catharines.

Our goal is to improve services for the psychiatrically disabled of Niagara, housing being a priority.

Having examined the proposed policy amendment and implementation procedures for the location of group homes in residential areas in the Region, the concerned members have taken the following position.

The regional municipality of Niagara has failed in its responsibility to ensure that individuals with special needs in our communities are GUARANTEED the right to live in their own communities in the supportive environment they need. The region should REQUIRE all municipalities to allow the establishment of group homes in residential areas.

Why should the Region require all municipalities to allow group homes to be located as a normal use in residential areas within their jurisdictions?

One of the most urgent Mental Health problems at the moment is the lack of proper accommodations and housing sufficient to meet the needs of psychiatric patients being returned to our communities. Group homes, and a variety of other community based residential programs meet the needs of those who, at some time in their life, need supervision, support and encouragement, in order to develop or regain a measure of self sufficiency.

Individuals with special needs are citizens or residents in all municipalities and communities. It is the responsibility of each community to care for its own citizens and prevent people from being simply located or dumped in the community.

Appendix, Page 43

The need for housing has been identified repeatedly. There is much evidence to support the belief that people would have a better chance of recovery if they had suitable accommodations, and the benefit of living in an accepting neighbourhood setting.

We all have the right to live as independently as we are capable of.

In DPD 1684 which outlines the proposed Policy Plan amendment and implementation procedures for the location of group homes in residential areas in the region, the rational for Regional involvement includes the need for consistency in terms of types of group homes, which are permitted in different municipalities, and the procedures which an applicant seeking to establish a group home must follow in different municipalities.

The proposed Policy Plan amendment will not result in consistency. Simply encouraging area municipalities will result in the municipalities continuing to select the types of group homes that are seen as most acceptable. The result, again, is the residents of Niagara with the most desperate needs will go unserved. REQUIRING the municipalities to allow the establishment of group homes in residential neighbourhoods will set the proper framework for orderly and fair distribution of group homes throughout the area municipalities. The concerned members support the "distance between group home requirements". A concentration of group homes in any one area of a municipality or in any one municipality is to be avoided.

The standardization of procedures which an applicant seeking to establish a group home must follow would streamline the procedure and greatly reduce the work required to establish group homes. Most group home applications come from volunteer community groups who are striving to fill an IDENTIFIED and DOCUMENTED need.

With your help we can fulfill Ontario's promise as a place everyone can live with dignity and in harmony with their neighbours

We invite you to join us in this important endeavour.

CONCLUSION

It is simply not good enough to follow the example of other jurisdictions in the Province. Niagara has an opportunity to be a leader in the development of a humane community. In conclusion, the Community Mental Health Action Coalition and Management committee for the housing program challenge the Councillors of Regional Niagara to take a progressive leadership role by REQUIRING all municipalities to allow group homes in all residential areas throughout the region.

Appendix, page 44

MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

LAND USE

Group homes and their location is not a land use issue. Group homes are residences like any other. Residents in any given group home are selected on the basis of appropriateness of the residence and its program for the individual.

COMMUNITY FEARS FOR SAFETY

There is no evidence to suggest that residents of group homes are more prone to violent behaviour than the general population. Research has shown that psychiatric patients are more often the victims of crime than the perpetrators of crime. Appropriate supervision is provided by trained staff in group residences and the staff is accountable to a management board consisting of local community citizens. This management board in turn is responsible to the community as well as its residents and its funding body. A Waterloo Study showed that 50% of people living within 300 feet of a group home did not know it existed.

PROPERTY VALUES

Property values do not go down because a Group home is located in a neighbourhood. Property values are determined by other more powerful factors in the marketplace. Studies in Toronto as well as in American cities have shown this conclusively. Again I stress, the Coalition supports the "distance between group homes requirement." The homes should fit into the general character and appearance of the neighbourhood. Concentration of group homes in any one area is to be avoided. This problem can best be avoided by allowing group homes in all residential areas.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION

"Why can't these people live in institutions?" you ask. For many, institutionalization is not necessary or appropriate. They are best served living in small family-like groups and integrating as completely as possible into the neighbourhood and community. There is abundant evidence that individuals with a wide variety of special needs do much better in small family-like settings than in large institutions. When housing is an individual's most pressing need, hospitalization is inappropriate and too expensive.

Community Mental Health Action Coalition

Deborah Hecker
Chairperson
685-1144

Newly Formed Management Committee
Canadian Mental Health Association Housing Program

Karen Stearne
Chairperson
358-3273

Resource Material

Not on Our Street
Authors: M. S. Dear, S. M. Taylor
Community Attitudes to Mental Health Care
(London, Pion, 1982) $18.95

Niagara's Health Action Plan for the 1980's
A Discussion Paper
October 13, 1982

Psychiatric Facilities Study Report
(Regarding the City of Niagara Falls, Ontario)
December, 1982

K. Stearn
wjc

Appendix, page 46

The City of
Niagara Falls
anada

City Hall
Niagara Falls, Ontario
L2E 6X5
(416) 356-7521

1983 10 19

Mr. C. Cambray
Regional Planning Dept.
P.O. Box 1042
Thorold, Ont. L2V 4T7

Dear Sir:

Re: Region's Group Home Policy

In the telephone conversation I had with you regarding the upcoming public meeting (October 27, 1983) concerning the Region's proposed Policy Plan Amendment for Group Homes, you indicated that this second meeting is a fulfillment of a requirement under the new Planning Act. You also indicated that all submissions and comments received by the Region to date will continue to be recognized.

Therefore, the City of Niagara Falls' submission, PD/49/83 (copy attached), still applies as a summary of the City's position regarding the Region's proposed policy plan amendment on Group Homes.

Yours truly,

A. Sachar
Planner I

AS/BB
Att.

cc. Mrs. D. Sheppard
Mr. P. Brennan

Appendix, page 47

(copy of handwritten letter)

1741 Niagara Pkwy,
Fort Erie, Ont.,
L2A 5M4,
Oct. 11, 1983.

PD-2231
RE. am-15

Mr. John Teal
Regional Councillor
151 Gilmore Rd.
Fort Erie, Ont.

re: Amendment #15 to the Regional Policy Plan with respect to the Location of Group Homes

Dear John:

As a professional in the field of rehabilitation, I have perceived a significant need for transition housing or "group homes" to allow individuals with special needs i.e. physical, emotional or mental handicaps to re-enter the community. Governments at all levels consistently support the concepts of "deinstitutionalization," "normalization" and "independence."

Yet the proposed policy plan amendment #15 re: the location of group homes does little to communicate to the municipalities that the Region strongly supports the establishment of group homes as a normal use in residential neighbourhoods. The proposed policy will result in certain types of group homes either not existing, existing in non residential neighbourhoods or being concentrated within one municipality.

I have enclosed a sample proposal which, if adopted, would provide the Region with the strength of its convictions in promoting and developing adequate transitional housing for persons with special needs. I urge you to adopt and promote this proposal in your discussions at Regional Council.

Yours truly,

"Susan Rochford"

Appendix, page 48

Proposed Wording for Amendment No. 15

to the Regional Policy Plan

With Respect to the Location of Group Homes

"The location and types of group homes which are permitted within a municipality shall be at the discretion of the area municipality.

The Regional Municipality of Niagara will encourage the provision of adequate and necessary group homes as a normal use in residential areas within the Region. The location of such homes will be subject to Provincial licensing and/or funding approval, both of which require compliance with municipal by-laws."

Nine Programs and Types of Group Homes and Related Information

Group Home Program	Residents	Funding		Profit or Non-Profit	Inspections	Approval/ Licensing	Competence of Operator	Support Services
		Rate	Continuance					
Approved Homes The Ministry of Health	Patients of provincial psychiatric hospitals who at this point in their recovery can benefit from a family oriented living arrangement in the community.	By the Province on a per diem or purchase of service, at no cost to the municipality.	Funding continues if service need exists and home is properly operated, in compliance with all municipal and provincial regulations.	Can be either	Annual formal inspection by Province. Municipality provides proof of compliance with all municipal regulations and by-laws. Ministry staff regularly visit the home. Funding renewal contingent upon formal inspection & proper operation.	Provincial approval/ licensing subject to compliance with all municipal and Provincial regulations. Can be revoked for non-compliance with municipal or provincial regulations, with removal of residents & closure of home.	Ministry responsibility: Operator must demonstrate knowledge & ability to provide required level of care. Most are non-profit organizations who have years of experience in human care services.	Availability of support services demonstrated by Operator as a prerequisite to approval or licensing. Most clients are residents of the community who require group home care in their own community.
Homes for Special Care Ministry of Health	Those living in homes for special care are individuals, who on discharge from provincial psychiatric hospitals or regional centres for the mentally retarded, require a sheltered community living arrangement.	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above
Community Resource Centres Ministry of Correctional Services	Those living in community resource centres are sentenced individuals who can benefit more from rehabilitation in a	Same as Above	Same as Above	Non-Profit Organization	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above

Appendix Page 49.

Nine Programs and Types of Group Homes and Related Information (cont'd)

Group Home Program	Residents	Funding		Profit or Non-Profit	Inspections	Approval/ Licensing	Competence of Operator	Support Services
		Rate	Continuance					
Community Resources Centres Ministry of Correctional Services Continued	community residential program than in a correctional institution The type of individual for whom the centre seems best able to provide service is the minor offender. All persons in these centres would be serving sentences of less than two years. A person who has committed a crime of violence, brutality or arson or who has committed an assaultive sexual offence would not normally be recommended for such a program.							
Halfway Houses for Alcoholics	The individuals residing in these homes are recovering from alcoholism.	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as a Above	Same as Above
Halfway Houses for Ex-Offenders Ministry of Community & Social Services	Residents of these homes are adults on probation or on parole from provincial correctional facilities or federal penitentiaries. They are individuals who would otherwise be living independently in the community and voluntarily enter the program.	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above

Appendix, page 50.

Nine Programs and Types of Group Homes and Related Information (cont'd)

Group Home Program	Residents	Funding		Profit or Non-Profit	Inspections	Approval/ Licensing	Competence of Operator	Support Services
		Rate	Continuance					
Halfway Houses for the Socially Disadvantaged Ministry of Community & Social Services	The residents of these homes are adults who are either social disadvantaged or who have emotional problems.	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above	Same as Above
Satellite Residences for Seniors Ministry of Community & Social Services	These are individuals over the age of 60 who are referred to satellite residences by municipal Homes for the Aged.	Municipal Funding by municipal Home for the Aged. Province defrays 70% of per diem.	Funding continues upon the inspection and approval by municipal Home for the Aged.	Can be either profit or non-profit	By the municipality every 4 months.	Approval by the Municipal Home for the Aged.	Responsibility of the Municipal Home for Aged.	Determined by the Municipal Home for the Aged.
Accommodation services for the mentally retarded. Ministry of Community & Social Services	Those living in these residences are mentally retarded children or adults who have previously been living in a community or facility setting.	By the Province on a per diem or purchase of service, at no cost to the municipality. Note: In Niagara Region we have an historic agreement whereby the Region pays 7% of the operating costs	Funding continues if service need exists and home is properly operated, in compliance with all municipal & Provincial regulations.	Non-Profit Organization	Annual formal inspection by the Province. Municipality provides proof of compliance with all municipal regulations and by-laws. Ministry staff regularly visit the home. Funding renewal contingent upon	Provincial approval/ licensing subject to compliance with all municipal & Provincial regulations Can be revoked for non-compliance with municipal or Provincial regulations, removal of residents and	Ministry responsibility- Operator must demonstrate knowledge & ability to provide required level of care. Most Operators have years of experience in human care services.	Availability of support services demonstrated by Operator as a prerequisite to approval or licensing. Most clients are residents of the community who require group home care in the community.

Appendix 7 page 51.

Nine Programs and Types of Group Homes and Related Information (cont'd)

Group Home Program	Residents	Funding		Profit or Non-Profit	Inspections	Approval/ Licensing	Competence of Operator	Support Services
		Rate	Continuance					
Accomodation Services for the Mentally Retarded Continued		of certain residential programs. Any new programs such as a Group Home would not be automatically included in that agreement.			formal inspection & proper operation.	closure of the home.		
Children's Residences Ministry of Community & Social Services	Those living in these residences are primarily children under 16 who because of special needs cannot live with parents or other relatives, but would benefit from an alternate living arrangement. Occasionally, homes have children who are 16 years or older.	By Province on a per diem or fee for service, at no direct cost to the municipality. Municipality defrays about 20% of total service budget of Children's Aid Society including C.A.S. placements in group homes.	Same as Above	Can be either profit or non-profit	Same as Above	All Children's residences must be licensed by Province in compliance with municipal regulations & regulations of The Children's Residential Services Act. License can be revoked for non-compliance with municipal or Provincial regulations, residents removed & closure of home.	Same as Above	Same as Above Operator must also demonstrate availability of space and program with in the school system.

Appendix, page 52.

POOR

QUALITY

ORIGINAL